



Teaching Matters

great teaching ... by design

CTE Revises Mission Statement

Last October, all the members of the Centre for Teaching Excellence (CTE) met for a two day retreat facilitated by Dr. Joy Mighty, Director of the Centre for Teaching and Learning at Queen's

University. As a new unit the CTE felt that it needed an opportunity to consider its mission and its strategic plans for the next several years. One of the most exciting products of the retreat was, in fact, a new mission statement.

Following the retreat, CTE members in small groups took on the task of further defining the key elements of the mission to help guide our work. The following wording emerged as the CTE's draft document.

Mission statement: The Centre for Teaching Excellence (CTE) provides leadership in advancing skilful, informed, and reflective teaching.

- **Skilful** teaching involves what we as teachers do, say, or make happen in order to improve learning. Skilful teaching can be learned and taught, acquired and honed. A skilful teacher also recognizes when and why to modify an approach.

- **Informed** teaching involves openness toward new ways of approaching teaching, and a willingness to adjust practice based upon what we learn by listening to students and through discussions with colleagues. Informed teaching is scholarly. It draws on current research and contributes to disciplinary practice in higher education.

- **Reflective** teaching is an iterative process that involves developing an awareness of what we do as teachers, why we make the choices we do, and how our choices impact students' learning. By examining and sharing our successes and challenges with the larger teaching community, we contribute to an ongoing dialogue about teaching and learning, and extend our own learning and development as teachers.

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Come Blog with Us

Now you can hear from the CTE all term long! Our newly launched blog is an online forum where CTE staff members contribute thought-provoking posts pertaining to innovations, issues, strategies, and resources in the area of higher education. Each week we'll have at least two new postings, and we encourage members of the UW community to respond to those postings using the "comment" function of the blog. Check out the latest blog postings on CTE's home page: <http://cte.uwaterloo.ca>.

Bringing International Perspectives into UW Classrooms



“Hello Biogeochemical Microbiology students at the University of Waterloo, my name is...”. These words are now echoed by a dozen of the world’s leading environmental microbiologists. In Fall 2007, Josh Neufeld (Assistant Professor in Biology) came up with an innovative idea to internationalize his fourth-year course, which was offered in Fall 2008 and involves student presentations on recent high-profile publications in the field of biogeochemical microbiology. After submitting a successful proposal for a UW course internationalization grant, Josh worked with a tech-savvy undergraduate student (Forest Rong Wang) to create a collection of digital interviews from international researchers whose articles were used in the course.

To demystify the process of scientific research and to connect his students with leading international researchers, Josh wanted the students to do more than simply read the articles and deliver standard in-class presentations. To address this challenge, he turned to current internet-based technology to contact international researchers from Germany, England, Austria, Netherlands and the U.S., sent Webcams for them to use and keep, and invited them to return recorded inter-

views with their ‘behind-the-scenes’ perspectives. All researchers responded enthusiastically and provided insightful interviews, telling Josh’s students about how their scientific discoveries were made, how this discovery shaped their career, and what they love about science and academia.

This novel teaching approach provided students with a chance to discover the personal side of scientific research and to have a very different level of interaction with the course content. Throughout the course, students in Josh’s class presented and discussed high-impact articles. Following each presentation, students watched an interview with the researcher who had conducted the research and written the article. The collected interviews offered a balance of male and female researchers, new faculty members, and well-established professors. This approach gave students a rare opportunity to see the diverse people and personalities behind scientific research, get to know the big-picture story behind each of the groundbreaking international discoveries, and appreciate the process of scientific discovery and publication.

Josh hoped that this personal touch would help students understand that scientific discovery is a current and international phenomenon, often catalyzed by graduate students who are not much older or more educated than themselves. He also intended that some of his fourth-year students would become inspired to embark on their own research journeys by applying to graduate schools, including those abroad, so that they could work with international re-

searchers whom they first ‘met’ through this course. In fact, several current students have already contacted the researchers featured in these interviews while developing ideas for their term paper, which involves generating a graduate-student research proposal that builds upon the discoveries presented in class. The concept is already beginning to work!



Internationalizing course curricula involves incorporating international and intercultural perspectives into teaching, learning, and assessment approaches. The goal is to expose students to global perspectives and international issues in their field of study, preparing them for the challenges and opportunities of global citizenship. To support UW faculty members who are interested in redesigning their courses to include international and global dimensions, CTE and Waterloo International award course internationalization grants each fall. To date, 16 UW professors have internationalized their courses, ranging from world music, to statistical forecasting, to resource management. If you are interested in discussing ideas about how you can internationalize your course, check our website:

<http://cte.uwaterloo.ca/grants/Internationalization/index.html> and contact Svitlana Taraban-Gordon at staraban@uwaterloo.ca.

Open Classroom with Ian VanderBurgh

Ian VanderBurgh's class may have started with math equations, but even those of us with little math background were completely engaged as Ian walked the class through an example of writing and breaking codes, tied in UW history about Prof. William Tutte, and encouraged everyone to attend the related upcoming UW Drama offering of *Julius Caesar*. We learned how to encrypt a message to avoid 'mono-alphabetic coding' (a phrase Ian encouraged us to practice). This is all part of how Ian helps students make connections beyond the calculations on the chalkboard, and in doing so, shows

how what happens in his class is linked to the larger world.

Throughout his class this past Fall, Ian's enthusiasm and energy shone, and were noted by those who attended as being a definite plus for an 8:30 class!

In the discussion that followed, Ian gladly answered questions about his approach to teaching and provided details of why he does things certain ways. We talked about tips for interacting with large classes (have a photo list to get to know names), how to encourage students to come to office hours (invite them to introduce themselves, hand back mid-terms in person), and getting stu-

dents to connect course work to their own lives (using popular culture references). Ian also has assignments due before class – to encourage students to focus on the class material rather than the unfinished assignment. He encouraged his colleagues to do what feels natural, saying "For me, telling bad jokes is natural!" Feedback from the colleagues who attended indicates that they left with ideas for things to try in their own teaching, and thoroughly enjoyed this session. Ian – many thanks!

Watch for this term's Open Classroom with Rohan Jayasundera from Physics & Astronomy.

Teaching Excellence Academy 2009

The call for nominations will go out shortly to Deans and Chairs from Geoff McBoyle, our AVP-A, to seek participants for this year's Teaching Excellence Academy (TEA). At CTE's fifth annual academy, we look forward to working with faculty members from across campus as they redesign a course and come away with a new course outline and an opportunity to connect with colleagues about teaching and learning issues. The dates are April 22, 23, 24, and 27, 2009, at St. Paul's College, and we are delighted to have faculty co-facilitators Gord Stublely (Mechanical and Mechatronics Engineering) and Judi Jewinski (English and Renison's English Language Institute) returning to share their TEA experiences. Come join us for TEA!

CTE Revises Mission Statement

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Bringing a group of people with diverse interests and experiences together to reflect on their practice was a challenging and useful exercise. However, now we need to check out our perception of what we do with our various audiences. What do you think of our new mission statement? Does it describe what you think the CTE should be doing at the University of Waterloo?

Please contact Catherine Schryer at cschryer@uwaterloo.ca or at ext 32579 with any of your insights or suggestions.



Last Paper CTE Newsletter

Due to financial and environmental concerns, CTE will no longer be publishing a paper version of our newsletter. As always, you can link to our newsletter from our CTE homepage. We will notify the university community as a new newsletter becomes available at the beginning of each term.

Teaching-Based Research Group Update

TBRG, the Teaching-Based Research Group, is a group of faculty and staff who come together to discuss research projects about teaching and learning, compare notes and share expertise on relevant methodologies, and talk about appropriate conferences and journals for publication as well as funding sources for supporting further research. While the majority of current members are present or past recipients of UW Learning or Program Initiative Fund grants, the group is open to others who share these interests.

While TBRG has been here for about three years, I'm the newcomer, and it has been a busy and exciting term meeting TBRG members and hearing about the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) research projects underway at UW. What I have learned so far is that we have an extraordinary group of SoTL researchers here who are doing extraordinary work!

What I've also been able to learn from these individual meetings is what would best support your

SoTL work. At the November meeting, you discussed the following priorities:

- Monthly newsletter – electronic digest form with hot links to funding sources, journals for publication, calls for conference papers, and other relevant information.
- TBRG meetings once a term – sessions of interest to the group that integrate examples from those who have done this kind of work (e.g., conducting survey research, data analysis methods, qualitative research, quantitative research for SoTL work, finding and writing grant applications, writing submissions for SoTL conferences, etc.).
- Wiki for short summaries of related theoretical work – ‘sound bites’ of SoTL theory to use as points of entry into the literature and support for cross-disciplinary partnerships (favoured by major funding groups such as SSHRC).
- Advocacy work – supporting and extending SoTL work at UW,

creating a more active TBRG presence on campus, and growing its impact both within and beyond our institution.

In addition, we look forward to our first one-day UW SoTL Symposium, to be held on Wednesday, May 6, 2009. We are thrilled to welcome Dr. Gary Poole, (UBC, and past President of the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education), as our keynote speaker. Rob Gorbet, Firas Mansour, Trien Nguyen and Bob Sproule join me on the planning committee. Abstracts for this peer-reviewed SoTL Symposium are due January 30th.

These are exciting ideas to grow our SoTL initiatives, and I look forward to helping implement them. We'll begin the monthly newsletter digest this term, and will hold one session on Planning and Conducting Survey Research – date to be confirmed. If you would like to be on the email list for the newsletter or would like to join the group, please email me at nsimmons@uwaterloo.ca.

Nicola Simmons

ISSOTL Conference Summary

The International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning conference, held in Edmonton in October 2008, provided a rich collection of sessions from international scholars about the state of research on teaching and learning. For me, the sessions highlighted current conversations and questions about this kind of research:

- Does SoTL grow from/live within the disciplines? Does it cross disciplines and build interdisciplinary bridges? Is SoTL its own discipline?
- Should SoTL research focus on teaching? Or on student learning?
- What is SoTL? What type of research is it and is it not?

Prevalent themes were the idea of interdisciplinary collaboration, especially as a way to appeal to funding agencies, and how we might build capacity in different zones:

- Micro: individual capacity, possibly in collaboration
- Meso: department and faculty
- Macro: institution
- Mega: discipline and interdisciplinary, national and international impact

Next year's ISSOTL conference will be held in Bloomington, Indiana, October 22-25, 2009. The call for proposals will be highlighted in the TBRG monthly news digest.

Nicola Simmons

Online Repository Provides Ideas for Teaching

When you need a little help or inspiration to design online components for your courses in UW-ACE, you can go to UW's Instructor Resources Repository (IRR). The IRR is a collection of reusable learning activities, page layout templates, and instructor tools and tips for teaching, all easily accessed from the UW-ACE course home page. The main section of the repository houses a number of online learning activities developed by UW instructors. These activities can be modified to suit specific content and course requirements. So if you like the idea or learning sequence of an activity but need to tweak it to make it work in your course, this is no problem. In this way, the IRR functions very much as an "idea generator".

The matrix. The IRR learning activities are linked into a visual matrix that describes each activity according to the instructional challenge that it addresses. As instructors, we have all dealt with instructional challenges in our teaching, such as helping students to manage their own learning, encouraging students to participate in class discussions, or creating opportunities for student-to-

student interaction in large classes. Each activity "link" in the matrix leads to an abstract that describes how the activity can be used in a course, in addition to the actual activity that can be imported into a course. The activities range from simple fill-in charts that help students organize course concepts and content to "required-post forums" where group discussions are enriched by allowing students to see other group members' posts only after they have formulated and posted their own ideas. Some learning activities test students' skills in understanding and synthesizing reading material or help them practice critical analysis, while others help students learn how to cite resources properly or identify what makes a research article scholarly.

All the activities in the repository originate from UW courses, and are submitted by an instructor or librarian (often working closely with a CTE Liaison or DCE Online Learning Consultant). All activities are peer reviewed by someone in the discipline, where there is discipline-specific content, before being posted. Each activity is also reviewed by an instructional designer for educa-

tional utility and reusability. The instructional designer comments on an activity's adaptability to other subjects or disciplines and its effectiveness as a teaching and learning tool, while the peer-reviewer ensures the quality of the content. This feedback is integrated into the activity before it is added to the repository.

Beyond learning activities. The Tools and Tips area of the IRR houses links to teaching resources such as an introduction to the use of rubrics, tips on how to facilitate effective discussions, or a template to design a syllabus. Descriptions of online teaching tools, such as Cmap or the Keep Toolkit for constructing eportfolios, and links to image repositories are also found in this area.

One good idea can generate another. We are always looking for ideas and resources to add to the repository, so if you have created an activity in UW-ACE that is working well in your course and you are willing to share it, please let me know at jholbroo@uwaterloo.ca. If you would like to learn more about using the repository or have a guided tour, please contact your CTE Faculty Liaison.

Jane Holbrook

Nicola Simmons...



As Research and Evaluation Consultant, Nicola Simmons supports the design and implementation of research about teaching and learning at UW. In addition to coordinating the Teaching-Based Research Group (TBRG) and LIF/PIF grants program, she assists faculty members with research-related activities: grant proposals, ethics proposals, conference proposals, and publications. Nicola pursues her own research in the Scholarship of Teaching and

Learning (SoTL), doctoral student and new faculty identity development, reflective practice, and qualitative research methods and ethics, and holds a number of research grants related to program evaluation.

Nicola is also a graduate advisor and teaches part-time in the Faculty of Education at Brock University, where she received her PhD for her study *What's different under the gown: New professors' constructions of their teaching roles*.

NETsavvy: What's New in New Educational Technologies

Last term, every faculty member who attended my “Techno Tuesday” workshop on screencasting left the room excitedly affirming that they were going to make this technology an integral part of their course delivery.

Screencasting, in case you don't know, is a method of capturing whatever activity appears on your computer screen, accompanied by your audio commentary. You can, for example, open a PowerPoint presentation and then talk your way through it: the screencasting software will capture the video and audio, and convert it into a compressed format that you can upload to the web – for example, to UW-ACE or YouTube.

Screencasting can have a profound impact on what you do during your class-time: content that was formerly delivered in class can now be delivered via a screencast, freeing up class time for activities that promote student engagement. Naturally, this works better for some types of content than others. For example, when I've taught *Richard III*, I have used screencasts to guide my students through the complex genealogy of that monarch, and then used the “extra” class-time to engage in discussions about the play itself. Thanks to programs like Camtasia (available from The CHIP in MC 1052), making a screencast is quite easy.

One other item regarding new educational technologies: the FLEX Lab in Dana Porter has been equipped with 22 brand new Tablet PCs, new and configurable trapezoid tables, a fresh coat of colourful paint, and a new podium that (unlike the old podium) can actually be moved without the assistance of Hercules. All of these changes are intended to support the FLEX Lab's mandate: to be a learning space where instructors can experiment with new educational technologies and innovative forms of student interaction.

To learn more about new emerging technologies, check out net-savvy.uwaterloo.ca or contact me at mmorton@uwaterloo.ca.

Mark Morton

Call for Teaching Award Nominations

Distinguished Teacher Award nominations are due in CTE (MC 4055) no later than **Friday, February 6, 2009**.

Award for Exceptional Teaching by a Student nominations are due in CTE (MC 4055) no later than **Friday, February 13, 2009**.

Visit <http://cte.uwaterloo.ca/awards/index.html> for further information on both awards or call Verna Keller in the CTE at Ext. 33857. What constitutes an effective nomination letter? Check out Trevor Holmes' CTE Blog entry called Effective letters for teaching-award nominations at <http://cte-blog.uwaterloo.ca/?p=9>.

Upcoming Events: Symposia on Teaching and Learning

May 4-5, 2009: We are delighted to announce that Dr. Gary Poole, Director of UBC's Centre for Teaching and Academic Growth and past President of the Society for Teaching and Learning, will deliver this year's Presidents' Colloquium on Teaching and Learning, the kick-off event for the Learning about Teaching (LaT) Symposium on Monday, May 4th. Gary will provide two hands-on workshops the following day for UW faculty members. The LaT is an initiative of UW's Teaching Excellence Council.

May 6, 2009: Dr. Gary Poole remains on campus and will deliver the opening keynote address for a new one-day, peer-reviewed symposium on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning entitled “Opportunities and New Directions”. This inaugural event, which is expected to attract presenters and participants from both on and off campus, is being coordinated by a subcommittee of the Teaching-Based Research Group.

New CTE Faculty Liaison for Accounting and Economics



As a CTE Faculty Liaison, Lynn Long assists instructors in the School of Accounting & Finance and the Economics Department in designing innovative learning activities that engage students online and in the classroom. She also serves as a guide for instructors to access other CTE resources. Lynn obtained her B.Sc. in Chemistry from the University of Western Ontario and worked for a number

of years as a coatings chemist. Completion of her B.Ed. led Lynn to a position at Fanshawe College where she designed and instructed courses for the Academic and Career Entrance Program. In 2005, Lynn moved with her husband and two children to her current home in Elmira. Consequently, she began and continues to teach distance education courses for Fanshawe College.

New CTE Faculty Liaison for Arts



As a CTE Faculty Liaison, Marlene Griffith Wrubel assists instructors in the Faculty of Arts with integrating technology into their teaching through innovative learning activities. She also assists instructors in accessing other CTE resources. Prior to joining the Centre for Teaching Excellence, Marlene worked in the de-

partments of Organizational & Human Development and Career Services at UW. She received her Masters of Education from the University of Illinois in 2005, and teaches part-time in the School of Business at Conestoga College.

Course Internationalization Grant Recipients 2008

CTE and Waterloo International are pleased to announce this year's winners and their courses:

Marissa Cunningham and Jamie Joseph (Pharmacy), PHARM 110/111: Anatomy, Physiology and Histology; **Doris Jakobsh** (Religious Studies), RS 325: Sex and the World Religions; **Luna Khirfan** (Planning), PLAN 408/648: Urban Design Seminar; **Anne Banks Pidduck** (Computer Science), CS 490: Information Systems Management; **Zhu Qian** (Planning), PLAN/GEOG 349: Urban Form and Internal Spatial Structure; and **Michael K.C. Tam** (Chemical Engineering), NE 335: Macromolecular Science 2.
Congratulations!

Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) at UW!

The three-day (24hr) Instructional Skills Workshop (ISW) is a collaborative learning model that uses videotaped microteaching and peer feedback sessions to support participants' teaching reflection and growth. The ISW encourages examination of teaching practices with feedback focused on the learning process rather than on the specific content of the lesson. At the same time, participants are able to work on discipline-specific teaching.

If you'd like to know more, or would like to sign up for the ISW scheduled for March 3, 5, 10, please contact Nicola Simmons at nsimmons@uwaterloo.ca.

Acting Instructional Developer



Sally Heath has been a TA Developer with CTE for the past year, and is excited about the opportunity to oversee the Certificate in University Teaching program for the Winter 2009 term while Dr. Taraban-Gordon is on maternity leave. Sally is a PhD Candidate in the Department of English and has taught in various disciplines at the University of Waterloo, Wilfrid

Laurier University, and Sheridan College. What she enjoys most about being involved in the CUT program are the opportunities to learn about and discuss teaching strategies with other interested colleagues, to provide helpful feedback to graduate students about their teaching, and to encourage future instructors to see the value in reflective practice.

Congratulations CUT Grads!

During the fall term, 8 CUT participants completed the program. Our newest graduates (at time of printing) are: Ashoo Anand (ENV), Reza Dorrigiv (MATH), Sheila Hannon (ARTS), Martin Laforest (SCI), Atefeh Mashatan (MATH), Deema Saleh (ENG), Ali Ulku (ENG) and EmikoYoshida (ARTS).

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Visit http://cte.uwaterloo.ca/events_registration/main-page-events.html for CTE Events!